1509/1075

REFLECTIONS

Ariſing from the

IMMORALITY

OF THE

PRESENT AGE:

In which ſome SELF-EVIDENT FACTS are pointed at, which ſeem to call for a more immediate Redreſs, than any other ARTICLE in our Policy, either at HOME or ABROAD.

When a Royal Palace is burnt to the Ground, every Man is at liberty to preſent his Plan for a new one; and tho' it be but indifferently put together, it may furniſh ſeveral Hints that may be of uſe to a good Architect.

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REFLECTIONS, &c.

THE attention of the learned having been for ſome time taken up with ſpeculations of a higher nature than merely the improvement of moral virtue, it is reſonable to doubt whether theſe Reflections, ſo different from ſuch ſublime matters, may not appear trifling; but as I don't pretend to enter into thoſe abſtruſe points that might engage a B——, a W——, or a H——, but am humble enough to confeſs myſelf content with ſuch a notion of the divine Being as my reaſon, unprejudiced by too much reading, has imprinted on my ideas, ſhall not preſume to treat of any thing, however faſhionable it may be to do ſo, either beyond my own, or my reader's comprehenſion; notwithſtanding which, I profeſs myſelf not ſo deſtitute of religion, but to perceive with concern how greatly a reformation of manners is wanted among us, though we ſhould have no farther thought or conſideration than meerly to our happineſs in this life, and which, from the few obſervations I have made during my exiſtence in it, am induced to think, (conſidering our preſent circumſtances,) may ſooner be brought about by the civil than the ſpiritual influence; for ſince the world, from the general voice againſt its impiety,

ſeems to be ſtill as wicked, or rather more ſo, than it was a century ago, it is pretty evident our theological reaſoners have but little conduced to its amendment.

I would not have it underſtood that I preſume irreverently to criticiſe or cenſure the laudable endeavours of our clergy, all I am concerned at is, that ſo much good learning and ſound doctrine ſhould have been flung away upon us, either from our not being able, or perhaps not being willing to underſtand it; for indeed, thoſe who have conformed their writings more to the level of our comprehenſions, by aiming to point familiarly at our abſurdities, have not ſucceeded better, than more myſterious teachers, while raillery and ſatire have been in every age ſo laviſhed on the times, that the ſtill erring world, from having felt the laſh for the ſame crimes ſo frequently repeated, is rather hardened in its follies, and like an old and obſtinate offender endures the accuſtomary diſcipline without a winch; ſo that the wit, as well as learning of the times, has either been miſconceived, or wrong applied. But ſince the endeavours of our keeneſt writers have hitherto been levelled only at the enormous follies of the great, while the plebeian herd, as if incapable of being brought to a feeling of their errors but by the arm of power, have had but little more than the example of their betters to improve by, it is probable, by attempting the vulgar in ſome way, they might be made to comprehend, excluſive of the whip *;

* Our preſent taſte for ballad ſinging ſeems not ill ſuited to it, if nothing better can be contrived.

and,

and, by a reverſe of politics, impartially giving up the rich, the gaudy, the polite, to the diſcipline they merit, that this inſenſibility, at leaſt, might be removed †. And though the legiſlature may at preſent have buſineſs on the carpet of more moment than conſiderations of this nature, it is pity ſomebody ſhould not, in the mean time, teſtify ſo much good-will for their ſuffering country (putting thoſe amazing warnings we daily hear of out of the queſtion) as to endeavour, inſtead of ſuperficially acquainting us of our going wrong, to put us more in the method of going right, by pointing out the probable motives of our backſliding, and preſent proficiency in wickedneſs; which (conſidering how little all our ſpiritual admonitions, lectures, treatiſes, *&c.* have conduced to put a ſtop to) it is reaſonable to think may be owing to ſomething different from what has hitherto been treated of. And as it is natural to my countrymen to be fond of enquiries, ſuch a one, I ſhould think, might turn out as much to the advantage of the public, as a ſcrutiny into the diſpoſition of national aſſets, or as attempting philoſophically to account for the natural cauſe of any of the preſent ſurpriſing phenomena in nature, excluſive of having the honour, by breaking the boom of ſin, as I may term it, of ſaving ſo much trouble to our betters, whenever the happy æra ſhall arrive when it may be judged convenient to ſet about reforming the vices of the age. But

† By putting the laws in force againſt them for drunkenneſs, ſwearing, ſabbath-breaking, *&c.* crimes which are at preſent only puniſhable in the vulgar.

as theſe are matters much too weighty for me to go through with, I ſhall preſume only to caſt in my mite, hoping, however, not to offend the ladies by declaring I cannot but conſider them, that is, our females in general, as the principal channel by which, while I am ſo civil to admit we might derive our greateſt happineſſes, ſo am I unpolite enough to believe, that moſt of our miſeries proceed.

Did I mean to make this appear according to the approved methodical way, it would be proper for me to begin by pointing out (what has been ſo often done before) the miſchiefs which have happened from, and muſt enſue, the great encouragement to luxury. I might, it is true, expatiate largely in how eminent a degree the ladies ever have been, and ſtill are contributors, as well as exciters to this exceſs; and ſhew that Rome above 2000 years ago was, from this very cauſe, almoſt in as bad a ſituation as ourſelves, though many good and wholſome edicts were publiſhed to prevent the encroaching evil, that memorable one in particular, which took away the right of females to inherit *, to the paſſing of which, Cato, the cenſor of that age, warmly contributed his influence, becauſe it ſeemed to reach the root of this pernicious vice; but ſince even this, ſevere as it was thought, proved to as little purpoſe as all they had done before, and that when Rome, corrupted by the wealth of conquered nations, began to change her manners (it is pity we want ſo good a plea for chang-

* The Voconian Law. See a fragment of Cato's ſpeech to the ſenate on the paſſing this law in Livy, lib. 5.

ing ours), the giving a check to female luxury was no longer minded; and as I may with reaſon deſpair to ſee that brought about in Britain, eſpecially through my means, which a Roman ſenate, with a Cato at their head, found ſo impracticable, ſhall peaceably leave gentlemen and ladies to the full ſwing of all their preſent innocent enjoyments, and only take the liberty of laying a hint or two before them, that may (if properly thought of) be of ſome ſervice to a future generation.

It is a maxim in phyſic, that though the malady appears but ſuperficial, to apply ſuch remedies as ſhall, if poſſible, eradicate the firſt cauſe, and by purifying the whole maſs, not only remove the preſent, but prevent the future diſorder. This hypotheſis, however juſt with regard to diſorders incident to our bodies, may ſeem more difficult to attend to, when we would attempt a cure in the miſconduct of the female world; the ſprings and movements of that various ſex, the ficklenes of their tempers, the unſteadineſs even of their wiſhes, and intricacy of their minds, with all the vaſt variety of hidden cauſes momentarily operating on every motion of their eyes, their tongues, and perſons, may reaſonably make us exclaim with our celebrated Spencer,

"O! who does know the bent of womens fanteſy*."

To attempt therefore accounting for that ſyſtem of inconſiſtency, that has by common acceptation been deemed through all ages, palpably unaccountable, may be looked on as very ridiculous; but

* Fairy Queen.

emboldened by the hope of removing ſome hurtful prejudices from the minds of my fellow-ſufferers, and reflecting on the equally frail, and indeed imperfect ſtate of man's nature, relatively to the other ſex, I have ventured into this labyrinth of perplexity; and though the general behaviour of the fair may incline us to conclude, that their ideas, habits, affections, and paſſions, are "puzzled with mazes and perplexed with error," yet that the tracing out the ſource of ſome of thoſe errors, and which ſeem to have an immediate and direct tendency to the immorality of the people in general, will not be ſo inexplicable an undertaking as at firſt it might appear.

Had the wits of former ages more conſidered cauſes, before they had preſumed to cenſure on their conſequences, our common place raillery in reſpect to women had not ſo much tended to degrade the ſex, nor could that reſpect we generally pay them be ever deemed an exaltation of thoſe whom nature had ſubjected to us, and whoſe inferiority and infirmities are abſolutely incurable.

To ſuppoſe that any error in their conduct is owing to ſome defect in their formation †, is a ſuggeſtion as impious as unwarrantable, ſince the allwiſe Creator, who ſurely formed nothing incompleat, adapted every faculty of this lateſt, and perhaps moſt perfect part of the creation, to the uſe he meant it; and when he gave to man the

† Numberleſs ſarcaſms, all tending to eſtabliſh this notion, are to be met with in moſt of the beſt poets, as well ancient as modern.

impulſes

impulſes of ſuch great and noble ſentiments, as friendſhip, love, and honour, he at the ſame time deſigned in woman an object not only worthy of attracting, but capable of returning ſuch regards, and having breathed in him a ſoul ſuſceptible of the force of beauty, to make the bleſſing perfect, gave to her that pleaſing ſoftneſs, that engaging delicacy to charm and bend his rougher faculties, and win him to her wiſhes.

Let us not therefore idly cavil with the fair for any inſignificant advantages, under pretence of natural preheminence, but be content in the poſſeſſion of our many legal ones, however we came by them; for though the impartial goodneſs of our Maker is ſo far manifeſt to both, that where he has beſtowed an excellence on the one, he has given the other the ſole prerogative to make it valuable; yet that the women may pretend to certain irreſiſtable advantages, meerly natural, is not to be conteſted, and which even ſeem a full equivalent for all that boaſted power the eſtabliſhment of human laws have given to the men.

Might I preſume to aſſign a reaſon why the great lawgiver of the Jews was ſo ſuccinct in his account of that moſt material cataſtrophy that ever happened, the firſt tranſgreſſion, I think I could not ſuppoſe a better, than that he was willing to paſs over as lightly as he could, the apparent ſuperiority of the woman, and perceiving (aſſiſted by the ſpirit of the Almighty) the diſadvantages the future race of men muſt be expoſed to, in conſequence of their prevailing power, unleſs reſtrained by more than human edicts, politically

introduced thoſe tenets * in his law, to counter-vail that paſſion againſt which the firſt of the creation had had ſo little power to reſiſt.

I ſhould not have waſted ſo much time or paper in premiſing all this, had it not been with a view to prepare my reader to acquieſce with me in a certain cautionary maxim, that it is prudent as well as politic, before we attempt to cenſure the failings and errors of our neighbour, to examine into, and, if poſſible, correct our own; and therefore, though we ſhould be capable to make it appear that woman, even from the firſt of them, was vain, yet let us be candid enough to acknowledge, that man was weak †; an imperfection ſo much worſe in conſequence, that it ſtill unluckily conforms itſelf to feed the unhappy failing of the other ſex, the fabled zone of beauty being experimentally leſs in the poſſeſſion of the woman, than in the mind of man; by which it is evident we ſtill retain the error of our great anceſtor, who, with the other calamities his imprudence inflicted on his wretched poſterity, intailed alſo that naturally incurable one, of being like himſelf prevailed on againſt the dictates of our reaſon.

It was from this firſt cauſe, this natural endowment, that cuſtom, not in later times, or in any particular quarter of the world, but eſtabliſhed univerſally from the firſt ages, has given to females certain privileges, which, if they amount not to prerogatives, are of ſo near a reſemblance, as ſcarcely to be diſtinguiſhed from them: and it has been remarked, that in all ages thoſe women,

* Gen. cap. iii. ver. 16. † Vid. Spect. N° 345.

whoſe

whoſe huſbands have bore any diſtinguiſhable mark of power in the government, have been more honoured, and more attended, than were the huſbands themſelves, nor have they loſt a tittle of this privilege to this day; and he who would make his fortune by preferment, has been ſure of ſucceeding ſooneſt, when he has been ſo lucky to engage a pettycoat intereſt in his favour *.

This ready acquieſcence to their wiſhes, ſpight of our boaſted power, as it proceeds from their natural aſcendency over our weaker faculties, ſeems ſo unlucky a fatality in our diſpoſitions, that it behoves us to endeavour making it as little prejudicial as we can, by attempting to find ſome expedient, though not to cure, at leaſt to help that in us, for which nature has been ſo frequently arraigned, for having left defective.

Mr. Hogarth, in his *Stages of Cruelty*, has indeed exhibited ſuch lively repreſentations of hardneſs and ferocity in the diſpoſitions of males, even from infancy, as to make the ſearch after the cauſe of evil ſeem not ſo difficult as it has hitherto been thought to be; but how far the neglect of an humanizing method of tuition may aſſiſt to confirm ill habits acquired in our youth, or indeed how far our common ſchool diſcipline is properly calculated either for removing ſuch, or inſtilling the virtues of humanity into boſoms perhaps not naturally tender, ought to be conſidered, eſpecially as there is reaſon to believe a barbarous

* Mr. Bayle even ſays, that the extravagant devotions paid by ſome Chriſtians to the virgin Mary is owing to the ſame cauſe. *Bayle's Dict. tit.* JUNO.

diſpo-

diſpoſition may more eaſily be flogged into a boy than out of him *. And though to ſurmiſe that evil, as it originally did, ſo muſt it ſtill, proceed from woman, may, on the other hand, ſeem too ſevere a charge againſt the ſex, ſince effeminacy, as well as barbarity, often appear equally owing to the prejudices of an improper education; yet is there no diſcipline whatever capable of winning, or rather of exciting, the diſpoſition of mankind (even againſt the bent of ſuch an education) either from, or to, the one or the other, occaſionally, like that, in which it would be ſtupidity not to acknowledge the fair ſex are ſo perfect.

On theſe principles, it is certain that nothing can corrupt the morals of mankind ſo much as a depravation of manners affecting the female world; too ſoon would even the name of virtue be extinct among us, did women not uphold it; the bare merit of making ourſelves appear amiable in their eyes, excites the adventurer to great and noble actions, warms his boſom with a deſire of fame, and puſhes him forward to atchieve the higheſt palm of glory and diſtinction; ſo where this lovely fountain is polluted, the contraſt is as evident; of which our frequent executions are only ſo many terrible examples; and if ſuch horrid wretches, who, from a life of looſeneſs and debauchery, become a ſcandal to the name of woman, are capable to urge the heart of man to perpetrate ſuch daring miſchiefs as every ſeſſions paper treats of, what cannot the delicate and more accompliſhed of the ſex inſpire? To be ſenſible of their power,

* See *Spectator*, N° 157.

let him who thinks himſelf the wiſeſt lay his hand upon his heart, and reflect on the favorite of his wiſhes, with all her winning ſoftneſſes, and pleaſing manners, and I ſhall have no occaſion to introduce ſuch known vouchers as Anthony or Alexander; each, by the palpitation there, would, I make no doubt, perceive the weakneſs I have been ſpeaking of, and even be ready, like the one, to give up the world; or, like the other, to ſet a Perſepolis in flames to pleaſe her *.

Prejudiced, as we may therefore ſuppoſe mankind to have been in the firſt ages of the world, againſt this female influence, it is no wonder they ſo far exerted themſelves, as to endeavour ſetting up a kind of artificial ſuperiority over thoſe tyrants of their nature. But, unenlightened by the experience of ſucceeding times, the only means they uſed to gain it, were, like their manners, rude, uncivilized, and cruel †; which introduced thoſe many

* Some of the commentators on holy writ have aſſerted, that the firſt murder proceeded not ſo much from the envy which Cain conceived againſt Abel, on account of his offerings being leſs acceptable to God than his brother's, but from a jealouſy ariſing from a very different motive; namely, the love of his twin ſiſter. See *Univerſal Hiſtory*, Vol. I. p. 151. in note (K).

† The Babylonians had a cuſtom of expoſing their virgins at a certain age in a public market, to be diſpoſed of by auction, where the money that was raiſed by the ſale of the beauties, was given in portions to thoſe who would accept of the diſagreeable.

The Samnites, a people in Thrace, had another cuſtom as ſingular; They convened all the young people of both ſexes into

many barbarous and uncooth cuſtoms, with regard to women, that formerly exiſted in different countries; by which, as ignorance and ſuperſtition were made the ground-work of their obedience, it followed, that timoroufneſs and dependency were miſtaken for it: but the world in general growing more poliſhed, women became, in conſequence, more conſidered as part of the community, and this nation in particular ſeems to have gone greater lengths (to its honour be it ſaid) in allowing females a rank in life more ſuitable to the deſign of their creation, than any other people in the world.

This, when we reflect on what is ſtill practiſed in all deſpotic governments, can only ariſe from a real ſpirit of freedom in ourſelves, and the advantages of our glorious conſtitution, by which the men, being free, their laws are generous and open, and comprehend the happineſs of every individual *. For this, was Rome diſtinguiſhed above the other nations of the earth, and before her manners were degenerate, and the freedom of

into one place, where the conduct of the males being examined into, he who was declared the worthieſt, had liberty to take what girl he fanſied moſt out of the whole nation; the perſon who was declared the ſecond beſt choſe next; and ſo on.

That among the Indians, and ſome other barbarous nations, of burning or burying women alive with their huſbands; a ceremony which from cuſtom the wretched victim eſteemed an honour, and was as proud of it as any of our modern widows of their weeds.

* Monſ. de Secondat ſays, the ſlavery of women is perfectly conformable to deſpotic governments, which delight in treating all with ſeverity. *Spirit of Law.*

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her conſtitution ſhaken, was as glorious for the virtue of her women *, as the bravery of her men; and from the like generous principles, Britons expect their women to arrive at (what it is unreaſonable to expect they ſhould, conſidering our own bad management) an equal virtue, and as high applauſe.

The time has been, perhaps, when England might have vied with Rome, for female virtue; when the tuition of her daughters was not conſidered as a taſk beneath the inſpection of her dames of honour; but ſince we have fallen into all the foppiſh ſoftneſs of our neighbour nation, and, like the ſons of ancient Sparta, given up our honeſt roughneſs for the polite refinements of another Athens, like their's, our manners are become corrupt; and the prevailing ſcheme of education ſeems rather introduced to ſuit our change, and carry the evil forward to poſterity, than to remove the grievance. And how can we expect it

* They drank no wine, admitted no viſits, nor went to any of their public ſpectacles, without permiſſion of their huſbands; and for upwards of five hundred years from the founding of their ſtate, there was no inſtance of a divorce in Rome. In return for this their virtue, they met with great reſpect whenever they appeared in public, and were indulged in that weighty argument of a woman's wiſhes, dreſs. No lictor or ſerjeant durſt lay his hands upon a Roman matron, though ſummoned to appear before the higheſt tribunal; nor did any magiſtrate, though attended with all the pomp of his faſces, oblige her to give the way. And ſhe even procured the ſame honour to her huſband, if riding with her in a chariot. *Memoirs of the court of Auguſtus.*

ſhould

ſhould be otherwiſe, when children are conſidered to be ſuch troubleſome commodities, that the generality of parents (whatever anxiety they may pretend to) from being either too rich or too poor, too ignorant, or too indolent, have ever an excuſe at their tongues end for giving themſelves as little trouble about them as they can help. And yet when they grow up are unreaſonable enough to blame them for falling into errors they were not in a manner permitted to avoid.

I am ready to admit a few exceptions to this general charge; and that there may be people whom ability, as well as inclination, prompt to do, what they both call and think the utmoſt in their power to make their children perfect; but even with theſe, I am ſorry to ſay it, the whole ſyſtem of female education, and which too is what we dignify by the term of highly bred, amounts to very little more than being for ſome years trained under the immediate inſpection of an upper ſervant *, whoſe principal qualifications for ſuch a charge, is, perhaps, ſpeaking French, or being able to inſtruct her in the firſt rudiments of female ſcience; that is, to make a courteſey; and eſteem it the higheſt happineſs to be made fine, and look pretty; from whence proceeds a certain ſecret pride and ſatisfaction in holding up her yet innocent face to be kiſt by any one, who admiring ſome perfection in her perſon, ſhe is taught to think has a right to ſuch a favour;

* It is a melancholy thought, that ladies of diſtinction ſhould be ſo little capable to inſtruct, as to be under a neceſſity of calling in ſuch aſſiſtance.

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baſhfulneſs, and being ſhy before ſtrangers, being the firſt fault that this careful governeſs thinks it her duty to remove; ſo that not conceiving, from never hearing of dangers, ſhe ought the moſt to be put in fear of, namely, the being too fond of what ſhe is continually plied with, flattery *; and conſequently her pretty ſelf is only made timorous of, and terrified at, fancied harms, which have their exiſtence in no place ſo much as in her governeſs's brain; whence antipathies, averſions, and whims, agreeable to the ſtupid notions of her inſtructreſs, being rooted in her mind, the appearance of a mouſe becomes an adventure of almoſt as much conſequence as would that of a lyon; ſince not to appear frighted, and ſcream at the ſight of objects, which cuſtom and faſhion have eſtabliſhed as terrifying, is an indication of great indelicacy. And under this influence ſhe remains till the time of ſending her to one of thoſe polite

* The over-fond ſtrain of expreſſion uſed to children, in commendation of their infant beauties, though it commonly decreaſes as the child grows up, ſo that at length it is intirely dropped by the parents themſelves, the reſt of the world are by that time ſo complaiſant to females as to take it up; by which the ſex continue, from their cradle to their death, in a continual round of flattery; for when that common fund of it, which youth and beauty might intitle them to, is exhauſted, their prudence, their diſcretion, and their good ſenſe, come into play, which is certain to continue with them to their graves, let them live as long as they will. It is from this general courſe of flattery that moſt of thoſe women who have made the greateſt figures in hiſtory, have not been preſerved, ſpight of their other qualities, from amorous foibles.

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repoſitories of beauty called a boarding-ſchool, where ſome branch of unprofitable needle work, a little reading and writing, with as much muſick and dancing as ſhe is capable of attaining, make up the ſum total of what ſhe is deſigned to know. And theſe perfections, with the unaccountable ſomething, being thought ſufficient to do the buſineſs ſhe was born for, at the killing age of ſixteen, the lovely wonder bolts from her concealment into a ſea of glittering trifles, chatter, and impertinence, cards, ſcandal, and intrigue, where ſhe compleats her education, and is preſently publiſhed to the world for being "A beautiful young "lady, endowed with all accompliſhments capable "of rendering the married ſtate completely hap-"py."——When therefore we conſider, that in reality theſe are the faſhionable points to which a modern education are confined, we need not be ſurpriſed our Porcia's, or Lucretia's, are ſo few.

It is acknowledged there is no very good argument againſt the inſtruction of the fair ſex in all branches of uſeful literature, unleſs it is, that they are but too powerful without it. But as the want of knowing how to conduct that power, ſeems the ſource of moſt of our preſent calamities, this objection, if it may be called ſo, is the beſt reaſon that can be given for tempering the dreaded influence by the advantages of a proper education; ſuch a one I mean as might elevate their thoughts above thoſe trifles and ſimplicities which amuſe at preſent; and conſequently, by taking them out of that method of idly buſying themſelves, which ſeems by cuſtom, and the acquieſcence of their parents,

parents, to allot them to folly and impertinence *, make them ſo truly ſenſible of the benefits they ought to enjoy from ſuch a power, as not ſo ſhamefully to glory in the *dear privilege* of abuſing it. This, while it ſeems the more rational, I am ſure, is the more chriſtian-like way of exerting the ſuperiority we pretend to; nor can I apprehend we have any more authority, by the law of nature or reaſon, to breed up our daughters in ignorance, under a notion of giving them an education ſuitable to their ſex, than the people of China have for making cripples of theirs, under any ridiculous pretence whatſoever †. And yet this ill-grounded notion among us, confirmed by cuſtom, is the principal reaſon why we ſo rarely find theſe happy advantages in the perſons of our deified Excellencies; or, even where we do meet with any ſuch in women, where neither capacity nor means are wanting to bring them to the higheſt perfection, is the cauſe why they are either totally diſregarded by them, or made but little to anſwer the glorious purpoſes they ought.

In countries where liberty (I mean female liberty) is leſs allowed than it is in England, and where, from the intemperature of the air, the impulſes of nature have ſuch ſtrength, that morality has almoſt none, a woman has very little occaſion for more

* *Spectator*, N° 10.

† The faſhion of having little feet was politically introduced in China, in order to keep their women helpleſs and ſubſervient; for which purpoſe they bind them with ſuch ſtrict ligatures in their infancy, as makes them cripples ever after.

accompliſhments than (that main article of our preſent breeding) a pleaſing manner of ſetting off her perſon, which, whether beautiful or otherwiſe, the vigilance of her huſband, father, or brother, from a zeal only of protecting his own honour, takes care to make the excellencies of real virtue of little or no account; ſo that diſcretion, modeſty, or prudence, in ſuch countries, can but be regarded as nominal perfections, ſince it is the uſe and application of them only that conſtitutes them virtues, and which, from not having opportunities of ever being put to the proof of, their women can have very little, if any occaſion, to cultivate *. But for women, who, I may ſay, have the happineſs to be born, and lead their lives in England, who are allowed to be partakers in all the happy privileges with the reſt of its conſtituents, and to whom not only their own, but their family's honour in them, is ſo freely, ſo unreſtrictively intruſted, ought ſurely to eſteem good ſenſe a more neceſſary article in their education, and make it as much their ſtudy to improve their underſtandings as their ſhapes; but theſe are maxims few are put in mind of, till they arrive at an age when it becomes faſhionable to make a jeſt of them; for which, as from the fountain-head, this graceleſs town pours round its ſtreams of vice to every ſhire, from whence again, in ſmaller chan-

* There are climates where, if a man be left alone with a woman, the temptation and the fall will be the ſame thing; the attack certain, the reſiſtance none. In theſe countries therefore, inſtead of precepts they have recourſe to bolts and bars. *Spirit of Laws*, lib. xvi. cap. 8.

nels,

nels, it ſpreads its baleful influence, in manners, faſhions, and amuſements, to villages and hamlets, each in degree partaking of the pleaſing poiſon, and thoſe who are the greateſt adepts, like bodies when electrified, diffuſe the inſinuating fire to all who venture near them. 'Tis hence the country maid, though wiſely trained in all the houſewifely perfections tending to ſocial happineſs, no ſooner learns the London air of tying on her hat, than innocency, from being the real, becomes the affected centinel againſt that dreadful foe, her vanity, whoſe aid-de-camp and emiſſary, faſhion, preſently takes poſſeſſion of her faculties, a company of ſtrollers gives her a reliſh for town diverſions, and a company of ſoldiers puts her upon plotting the means of taſting them, as ſhe is told, in higher perfection; flattery prevails, her centinel gives ground, a dance compleats the buſineſs, and the captain (unleſs a miracle interpoſes) acquires the glory of carrying her off in triumph; and the town is, in a little time, perhaps, beholden to him for furniſhing it with a new face.

Thus, by corrupting one another, we become the ſpoilers of our own delights; and, like wretches to whom cuſtom has made even ſlavery pleaſing, find pleaſure in the conſequences of our miſeries; and being, from a depravation in our taſte, incapable to reliſh much higher, or more refined gratifications, than thoſe we have in common with the meaneſt part of the creation *, train up the

* There are a ſort of men (ſays the *Tatler*) who have but one reaſon for ſetting any value upon the fair ſex, who conſider even brides but as new women, and conſequently neglect them when they ceaſe to be ſuch. *Tatler*, N° 53.

better half of God's creatures in ſuch a way, as meerly to anſwer the purpoſes of thoſe vitiated inclinations, and no more. Hence it is proceeds that ardour, that attachment to a common proſtitute, which we ſo frequently hear of, in preference to women of virtue; the benefits the latter may receive from education, not lifting them above the common rate of women, ſo as in reality to make their real perfections appear even adequate to thoſe ſeeming ones, which their adverſaries acquire at a much leſs expence; the viſible qualifications of both being ſo nearly alike, that a young lady, who has had the honour to be trained up at a very little charge, under the polite tuition of mother —— for her own and the public ſervice, ſhall make as *deſirable* an appearance with reſpect to perſonal accompliſhments, on any common occaſion, as one, who through the indulgence of her parents, may have had hundreds expended on her at — or —; and what is ſtill worſe, the former, from a certain unreſerved gaiety of diſpoſition, a knowledge of the world, and, perhaps, a freer converſation with men of humour, is, according to the unhappy taſte of the preſent times, often eſteemed the more converſable creature.

To conſider young women of a lower ſphere in life, I mean ſuch, who not having, or indeed expecting but little more fortune than what they bring with them into the world, are placed with milleners, mantua-makers, and ſuch like buſineſſes (for as to thoſe who, for the like reaſons, are obliged to condeſcend to wait on their ſuperiors, either in the characters of chamber-maids, or otherwiſe,

wiſe, either come out of, or bear ſome affinity to this claſs of people); as theſe, I ſay, cannot be ſuppoſed to have the opportunities, or means of acquiring that eminence in perfection, as might be expected from young ladies of family and fortune, they really do not ſeem to ſtand ſo much in need of it; the little occurrences in their ſeveral buſineſſes employing them ſufficiently, ſo as not to permit their time to hang ſo intolerably on their hands, as with women in a more exalted ſtation of life. But as no ſort of people in being aim more at emulating their betters than theſe do, would ladies of rank and condition ſet them properer examples, it is probable they would as readily follow ſuch, as thoſe they are now ſo punctual in: for it is really a melancholy thought, that there ſhould not be, ſome how or other, a more reputable method found out of bringing theſe ſort of people upon the ſtage of life, than by permitting them to introduce themſelves there in the ſcandalous manner they generally do. The pleaſure of becoming independent, that is, uncontrolable, at an age when they are ſo little capable, of taking proper care of themſelves, is the firſt ſtep that ſets them above their conditions; and having imbibed poliſter notions of life, or rather of gaiety, than the ſtation which, perhaps, their parents are in, may admit of, are conſequently above their advice, were they capable of giving them any. Theſe ſort of ſecond-hand young ladies therefore being, by far, too much what they call their own miſtreſſes, make no inconſiderable part of that throng of people who daily reſort to all our public diver-

ſions; and who, by the aſſiſtance of a pretty-enough manner, acquired from the nature of their ſeveral employs of ſetting off themſelves to the beſt advantage, are ready to flaunt about with any young fellow they can meet with, who is willing to pay for the entertainment; I ſay willing, becauſe many of them are not very able to do it. But to paſs by the almoſt certain miſeries that familiarities entered into in this manner, may produce to the young ſpark, who thinks himſelf ſo happy in being the gallant, and who very commonly owes his undoing to the conſequences attending the frequent repetitions of ſuch expences, which miſs, or her companions, (for every ſeamſtreſs, mantua-maker, and millener, is miſs by the courteſey of England) ſeldom fail to promote, I ſhall only hint at the ills which naturally follow with reſpect to the young woman, whoſe wrong ſetting out makes her fall into all thoſe dreadful errors which the vices of a corrupt age model into ſuch favourable proſpects. She ſets out indeed with a view of making her fortune, not by the buſineſs, or employment, in which ſhe is placed, that being made ſubſervient to her other views, but by an advantageous match (the mark at which every little thing is taught to aim); to accompliſh which, ſhe commonly fixes her inclinations in as chimerical a manner, and under a falſe idea of prudence, lays it out in her own ſimple head, how far ſhe may, without danger (as they call it) give a freedom to her behaviour, not conſidering that the modern gaieties of a town life do greater miſchief under the veil of innocency, than they could did every indiſcretion

of

of that ſort appear openly attended with a crime; for, by diſcompoſing, or ſoftening the mind, they make it incapable of reſiſting when it ſhould; and the poor girl, in a dream of fancied happineſs, imagining it all elogium round her, comes by degrees to have ſo great a confidence in the ſuppoſed honour of her admirer, as prevents her paying that deference to her own which ſhe ought; and though ſhe may be capable of protecting herſelf from perſonal injury, might find that, to which her reputation muſt be expoſed, leſs eaſy to defend, the world being ſeldom ſo good natured as to accept of apologies for ſuſpicious actions, when once diſcretion has been apparently laid aſide.

This leads me to mention that dangerous cuſtom, which, as it has not been of long continuance, and ſeems to have been already properly taken notice of by ſome of our worthy magiſtrates, may be eaſier removed than ſome others of a deeper nature; I mean the nightly aſſemblies at the apartments of advertiſing dancing-maſters, or others, under a notion of improving young people in this agreeable ſcience, as it is termed, in order to perfect them in a genteel behaviour, and which cannot, it is pretended, be ſo effectually done, as by a continual courſe of practice in that moſt laborious branch of it, country-dances; and though it is allowed the gentleman, who preſides as maſter of the ceremonies, may take all imaginable care that no indecorum ſhall be committed in his ball-room, I don't really ſee how he can anſwer for what may happen any where elſe, after a young wench has been friſking about with a handſome fellow for two or three

hours together, expoſed to all the incendiary qualities of mirth, wine, and muſic, heated with, and excited by, all thoſe attitudes which herſelf and partner are continually varying, as well to pleaſe each other, as the reſt of the company :—Let any one, I ſay, man or woman, who has partook of ſuch diverſions, reflect how they have felt themſelves upon the like occaſions, and when they ſeriouſly think of it, they'l own the Italian proverb not badly founded, which ſays, *Chi manda ſua figliola ad ogna feſta, in puoca tempa ne fa una putana* ; that is, *He who lets his daughter go to every merry-making, in a ſhort time will make her a w*——, ſince theſe aſſemblies are not better calculated for the commencement, than they are convenient for the finiſhing of amours.

That turn of behaviour, miſtaken by the generality of the world for gallantry, and which every barber's boy would eſteem it an affront to be ſuppoſed deficient in, is in a great meaſure the cauſe of this, as well as of many other indiſcretions of the like nature, and which by a favourable opinion we naturally entertain of ourſelves, and the incitements ariſing from that opinion, we conſtrue into a ſpecies of heroiſm and magnanimity, when in reality it is nothing more, though we were to trace it as far back as the days of Oroondates, Amidis de Gaul, or the divine Mandana, than a pleaſing kind of ſparkiſh impertinence, founded on the principles of ridicule and repartee, to which the faculties of females, for want of knowing how to employ them better, are ſo aptly ſuited, as ſerves to render them corruptors even before they are corrupted, and is in

fact

fact the groundwork of all thoſe youthful ſkittiſhneſſes and ſilly affectedneſſes, ſo prodigiouſly ſtriking, and ſo univerſally practiſed, from the mantua-maker's 'prentice to our daughters of quality.

Had the unhappy cauſe of theſe effects been capable of remedy from precept only, the unwearied labours of our clergy might, one ſhould think, have ſtopped the increaſing miſchiefs; but it is not precept can outweigh example, when rooted from our childhood, and as infants cannot be capable of retaining, ſo are they not of profiting by the grave leſſons of a pulpit orator, while their parents, to whom the inſtruction is directed, have ſo little regard to it themſelves.

Preſent pleaſure, as well as preſent pain, when put in competition with future happineſs, or future miſery, muſt, when we conſider that the frailty of human nature like a dead weight is thrown into the ſcale with the former, greatly overpoiſe the latter; and though it be admitted, that no real virtue can exiſt where there is a thorough contempt of all religion, yet, would our preachers adapt their diſcourſes more to the immediate ills of a corrupt age, and explain the miſeries which mankind muſt, and actually do ſuffer in this life, in conſequence of ſuch corruption, it would poſſibly ſtrike deeper, than all their flouriſh of argument on the imaginary terrors of a puniſhment hereafter: not that I am againſt their embelliſhing or enforcing their precepts with the joys of heaven, or the pains of hell, but as I fear the pleaſures of the one, or the miſeries of the other, may in this very enlightened, this philoſophic age,

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be deemed ſubjects too foreign of themſelves to remove any particular grievance of this nature, while at the ſame time opening curioſity prompts, pleaſures intice, and the wrong examples of others conſpire to make deeper and more intereſting impreſſions.

As virtue then is ſo difficult of acceſs by the plain path of precept, how cautious ſhould we be, and what more than ordinary care is proper to be taken, to ſtop every loop-hole through which vice, however diſguiſed, may enter to polute our children's minds, or vitiate their early imaginations? ſince what avails the pious care, the dear regard, the blooming hope of every happy mother, bleſt, as ſhe thinks herſelf, in being the parent of a beauteous offspring, if, almoſt at the ſame inſtant, the mind of the fair infant, from whence imperceptably ſucceed theſe evils, while in the bud, is cankering and corrupted?

That obſervation of Pliny's *, *talis ſunt aquæ, qualis terræ perquam fluit*, may properly enough be alluded to infants, whoſe minds being equally as ductile, partake of, and are tinctured by the manners, ſpeech, ſentiments, and habits of thoſe with whom they uſually converſe, or are brought up with †; but as it may be ſomewhat difficult for the poorer ſort of people, who by education and cuſtom are eſtabliſhed in a levity of manners, to keep ſo continual a reſtraint upon themſelves, as not both to do, as well as ſay, every thing which that cuſtom and their ſtation in life ſeems to al-

* On mineral waters.

† Vide *Middleton's Life of Cicero*, p. 10.

low a liberty for, I don't ſee (unleſs we could invent ſome method that might anſwer to what the Indians call *huſkanawing* *) how the contagion is to be prevented. Coachmen, carmen, and porters, as well as others of the loweſt claſs of men, will therefore ſwear and talk bawdy † by way of recreation, and who ſhall preſume to prevent them? And from the like motive, the females of Billingſgate, barrow-trulls, oiſter-wenches, whores, drabs, and baſket-women, would think their privileges as much affected, ſhould any body pretend

* A ceremony ſaid to be practiſed by the Virginian indians every 14 or 16 years; being a ſevere purgation in order to eradicate the vicious principles which men are ſuppoſed to imbibe in their youth, and which they believe are ſo deeply rooted in the mind when young, as not to be intirely removed but by a thorough intoxication, or rather a total deprivation of the ſenſes: this is what all the youth of condition are obliged to ſubmit to, before they can expect to riſe to honour or preferment. It is effected by the force of a poiſonous liquor taken for that purpoſe till they become ſtark mad, in which dreadful ſituation they permit them to continue a conſiderable time. And ſo determined are they of the neceſſity of this ceremony, that if they perceive a man to retain the leaſt ſenſe of his former condition, by recollection of his country, his parents, or even his language, without freſh inſtruction, they oblige him to undergo the diſcipline a ſecond time, which generally anſwers the purpoſe ſo well, that it puts him out of danger of ever going through it again. Vide an account of this ceremony at large in *Baily's Dict.* fol. edit. under tit. HUSKANAWING.

† The Roman civil law gave a woman an action as for a perſonal injury for obſcene words uttered before her, tho' not deſigned as a ſolicitation of her chaſtity.—This is what we moderns call innocently ſpoken, or by way of gallantry or recreation.

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to control them in either of theſe particulars. That there are laws, and very proper ones I believe, againſt curſing, ſwearing, drunkenneſs, and other lewd and diſorderly practices, is certain, but they are laws which, as Shakeſpeare ſays,

" Stand like the forfeits in a barber's ſhop,
" As much in mock as mark——"

and if ever they are put in force, it is pique, not principle, occaſions it; for ſhould a man preſume to put any of them in execution, through a ſpirit of reforming the age, he would not only be deſpiſed and ridiculed, but actually abuſed as a peſt in his neighbourhood, and an open enemy to the conſtitution of his country, in attempting to abridge the meaneſt of its members in any one privilege, which they may have taken in their heads to be incident to a free people. Can it then be ſuppoſed or expected, that the children of ſuch free agents ſhould have better or higher ideas than thoſe they muſt imbibe with their milk? they, like their parents, ſtruggle through the world in a way too terrible to think of, doing all the miſchief in every ſtage of life through which they paſs, that may reaſonably be expected from people who can have no idea of moral virtue; and ſuch of them as Providence does not cut off by an untimely end, ſerve to bring other wretches into life to ſcramble through it in the ſame deſperate manner, the males, generally taking up with the avocation of the father, or ſomething worſe *, and the females, before

* This evil (I mean with reſpect to the males) ſeems for the preſent to be a little eaſed by the prudent, as well as public-

fore they arrive at all the accompliſhments of their mother, chooſe a trade for themſelves, into which they are initiated by one another; and how much theſe creatures are capable of ſpreading the contagion among all degrees of life, let any one conſider who beholds the number of young girls, children I might ſay, who nightly infeſt the public ſtreets, catching like little harpyes at every male they wiſh to make a prey of, eſpecially on the evenings of their chiefeſt carnival, the Sabbath, when the leiſure and liberty the day allows, gives ſuch numbers of our youth a real pretence for the opportunity of falling into the deſtructive temptation; and there are few, in theſe days, who are bleſt with ſuch a ſtrength of reſolution, as to be able, like St. Francis in the print, to reſiſt the force of proffered beauty, when ſecrecy and opportunity conſpire; and I believe many a hopeful lad has been drawn into indiſcretions he might never think of before, meerly for the ſake of cheaply ſatisfying a ſimple curioſity, and making himſelf more able to join in, or reliſh diſcourſes on ſuch topics, without appearing ridiculouſly unknowing to more faſhionable young fellows than himſelf.

The dominion the clergy hold over every man's private conſcience, as well as his perſon and eſtate, in all catholic governments, and particularly over

lic-ſpirited care of ſome particular magiſtrates in the ſcheme they have ſet on foot for ſupplying his Majeſty's fleet with young ſailors; but as this in all likelihood may be only temporary, unleſs ſome further care be taken (I mean of the females), Tyburn, it is to be feared, will have little reaſon to complain of their conduct. Vide *Public Advertiſer*, May 4, 1756.

infant

infant minds, muſt be allowed to be ſome check, eſpecially among the low and ignorant people, as well to public as to private wickedneſs; for as no wretch is ſo deſtitute or poor, as not to have ſome care taken of his faith, his ſpiritual monitor ſpares no pains to rummage out his conſcience, as well by threats as perſuaſion; and though the reformed clergy may be equally zealous in their way, yet their power not being ſo extenſive, nor their means of intelligence ſo politically made an article of eternal ſalvation, they certainly have not ſo good a hank upon the minds of the vulgar, who are ever affected by the pageantry more than the Tenets of a religion; hence it is that the common people in England, from being permitted to be more careleſs in their œconomy and leſs regarding the commiſſion of venal offences, ſeem not only leſs civilized, but even appear of baſer morals than people of the ſame claſs in catholic governments; not that ſuch people are better through wholeſome inſtruction, or better laws, but becauſe they are compelled at leaſt to ſeem ſo, meerly through the terror of what their ſpiritual tyrants might inflict on their perſons or their purſes: and that this terror alone has ſuch an influence, is demonſtrative in the vagabonds of the Romiſh church in England, particularly the Iriſh, of whom one half of the abandon poor in and about London conſiſt, who living out of the fear of a ſtrict ſpiritual juriſdiction, and the civil one with us not anſwering the ſame purpoſe, are as diſſolutely wicked, if not more ſo, than if they had, like the other half, no religion at all.

I would

I would not be thought to recommend a ridiculous auſterity, or a preciſe demureneſs in ſpeech or geſture; yet may it be remarked, that the people called *Quakers*, from a ſomething it is to be preſumed in their manner of education, do not ſeem to permit that contempt of modeſty to creep in upon them, by ſuch a familiarizing their children to obſcurity in ſpeech or action, as we of the eſtabliſhed church ſeem to think ſo trivial; and it is pretty evident, thoſe of both ſexes of that religion retain, at leaſt, an appearance of this ſingularity all their lives; nor are acts of indecency, or public ſcandal, ſo much to be obſerved among them, as among thoſe of any other religion or ſect in the whole kingdom; and though (through prejudice perhaps) we reproach them with hypocriſy, it is certainly a political one, and founded on a proper principle, while the habitual practice proves it rooted in the mind, as a fundamental from their infancy, which therefore is permanent*: and though we do not allow any one article beſides in their cuſtoms or behaviour to be eminently praiſe worthy, certainly that primary cauſe, which has enabled ſuch a body of people ſo long to defend their outward manners from a taint of that corruption which is continually

* A legiſlature ought to baniſh from his people univerſally all obſcene converſation as much as any other vice, for, from a readineſs in talking lewdly, one is eaſily brought to act and live ſo; but ſpecial care ſhould be taken, that young people neither ſpeak nor hear any thing of this kind (*a*).—*Ariſtot. de Reipub.* lib. vii. cap. 17.

(*a*) *Nam bona facile mutantur in pejus; nunc quando in bonum verteris vicia?* Quint. lib. i. cap. 1.

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attacking them, is not only juſt, but in ſome reſpects worthy of imitation †.

Whether we have in reality ſuch a perfection in our nature, as what may be termed *innate modeſty*, is immaterial to diſpute about at preſent, eſpecially ſince the few common rudiments which an infant can't avoid imbibing in its tendereſt days, evidently prove, that if ſuch a principle is not natural, it is ſo little removed from it, as to occaſion a ſort of difficulty in determining whether it is ſo or not; and from theſe firſt impreſſions proceeds that conflict, that kind of ſtruggle in the mind, which every young creature goes through before ſhe has the confidence to lay it intirely aſide. This early promptitude to ſhame therefore, though it may argue an aptitude in the human mind to receive the rudiments of virtue, is equally of force to convince us, how ready it may alſo be to imbibe the taints of vice, notwithſtanding any ideas we may falſely conceive of innate principles to either; for the plant, though promiſing and hardy in its nature, flouriſhes or droops according to the culture of the ſoil, and even the roots of concealed weeds, may, by their prevailing ſtrength, attract the kindly moiſture of the earth from purpoſes more profitable, unleſs prevented by a timely caution.

Thus have we many ridiculous cuſtoms in uſe among us, which having been eſtabliſhed for ſome ages, and the continued practice of them not having had any viſible or immediate ill effect, have therefore ever been, and ſtill are looked upon as

† See a compariſon between Mr. Penn and Lycurgus. *Spirit of Laws*, lib. iv. cap. 5.

mighty

mighty harmleſs; but on a ſcrutiny into ſuch, we may find them, harmleſs as they ſeem, to have no very good effect upon the baſis of moſt of thoſe qualities we call commendable, our modeſty; but I ſhall only mention two or three of theſe innocent cuſtoms, and leave the conſiderate to judge how far, at leaſt, the precepts of all moral virtue, nay, even the innate principles of it, if there were ſuch, may be affected by them.

The firſt I ſhall mention, is the liberty the men fancy themſelves privileged to take, of publickly making water in the ſtreets, as occaſion or humour ſhall direct them, though at the ſame inſtant they ſtand to do it in the moſt indecent poſture, with regard to which, the moſt vulgar part of mankind ſeldom give themſelves the leaſt concern about.

It is ſomewhat ſtrange that a trifling cuſtom ſhould countenance the men in any one act the leaſt tending to a public indecency, more than it does the women; and we ſhould put an odd conſtruction on her behaviour, who ſhould be ſo hardy as to take the ſame liberty in the face of the people, though in the very act ſhe might betray nothing more indecent, than the action itſelf, which, I'll allow, may be no otherwiſe ſo, in either ſex, than what the aſſociating ideas, which the ſhameleſs manner of doing it, may excite, in the minds of thoſe who may be conſtrained to be ſpectators *; but

* It was argued once, in alleviation for the injury of a rape, that the young woman had wilfully expoſed herſelf on ſome ſuch occaſion before the delinquent, by which ſhe had excited his deſires to commit the crime.—How far ſuch a plea may be founded on reaſon, I refer to the examination of every man's own breaſt.

how we can pretend to preſcribe limits to the ideas of our females, on ſuch, any more than on any other occaſion, is a myſtery to me; and however capable the human mind may be of curbing or reſtraining its expanſive faculties, it may be found as difficult for many of our females to do it effectually on ſo critical an occaſion, as perhaps on any we could frame; and though cuſtom may permit a man to be as public in what he does of this kind as he pleaſes, it muſt be allowed he makes as inamiable an appearance in ſuch a poſition, (to his own ſex* at leaſt,) as in any attitude he could put himſelf, while at the ſame time he may either give pain to, or provoke a worſe ſenſation in the female, who ſhall perhaps be cloſe at his elbow.

There may be, it is true, ſome countries where men and women alike lay aſide almoſt all reſtraint in this particular; and I have heard, that it is no more uncommon, among the moſt polite people of the moſt polite nation under the ſun, to make parties to aſſemble at a certain neceſſary place, than for any other innocent amuſement, or for a young lady to make no ſcruple publickly to ſpeak of her own, or her friend's habit of body, in the plaineſt, and, we ſhould deem, the moſt indecent terms. To countenance this freedom we are aſſured, that on enquiry among travellers we may find, that thoſe nations are far from being reckoned the moſt libidinous, where it is the cuſtom for the perſons of the ſex to be moſt expoſed †. It ſhould

* This aſſertion is, I am afraid, rather too general, there being ſome men, who, to the ſcandal of their ſex, are far from being diſguſted at ſuch exhibitions.

† *Univer. Hiſt.* vol. vii. pag. 14. in note A.

however

however be conſidered, that the people of ſuch nations follow nature ſo cloſely, that they ſeem but one degree removed from brutes, and from the want of more civilizing manners, are lead chiefly by a kind of inſtinct, by which little or no reſtraint is laid on inclination; but in countries ſuch as ours, where LAW, SHAME, IGNOMINY, and WEDLOCK, have been conſtituted in aid of ſocial life, the numerous reſtraints ariſing from ſuch inſtitutions, rather excite than leſſen our deſires, as a gauze handkerchief, negligently pinned, rather heightens than conceals the beauties of a fine neck; and a man muſt be endowed with a larger ſhare of philoſophy than common, if he did not undergo a ſeverer conflict in himſelf, and his imagination be carried to a greater height, in being permitted to aſſiſt a pretty lady in putting on her ſhift and under-pettycoat, than had he been accuſtomed to behold the ſex without any covering at all. How far ſuch innocent gallantries may be ſuitable to the airy tempers of our mercurial neighbours, I can't ſay, but few real Engliſhmen would, I believe, prefer even the innocent freedoms of a French ſpouſe, to the ſober manners of an Engliſh wife, ſince thoſe very ſtriking beauties, that may be thought perfections in a miſtreſs, alter their properties in the perſon of one whoſe diſhonour is ſo immediately our own; and therefore, though the women in England may be permitted to enjoy many privileges in common with the men, cuſtom has not brought them to throw off ſo much of their modeſty, but that they ſtill preſerve ſome few delicacies, which our yet not over-poliſhed Britons, may think eſſen-

tial for them to obſerve; how time, and an improvement in our taſte, indeed, may make them diſcard even thoſe, I don't pretend to ſay, but as ſwearing or talking bawdy has, if any thing, a more diſagreeable twang with it, when iſſuing from the mouth of a female, let her ſtation be what it will, than it has from that of a drayman, it is to be hoped they will not continue to carry their boaſted privileges or prerogatives to ſuch a height, as to lay aſide many more of thoſe niceties, which we yet eſteem peculiar to their ſex, only for the ſake of bringing themſelves nearer upon a level with the men *; and it would therefore be full as well, if the men would, for the ſake of the next generation (which may elſe improve upon the abſurdities of this, as this has done upon the laſt) at leaſt ſet them as few vicious examples as they can with conveniency, and particularly, that they would forego that trifling privilege, or rather cuſtom, of being ſo public in their *Evacuations*, which, without conſidering how offenſive it makes our ſtreets, alleys, and corners, may be of worſe conſequence with us, than any of thoſe cuſtoms which we eſteem ſo monſtrous in people of other countries, (where ſelf-

* I don't mean to exclude the ladies from any of thoſe maſculine amuſements they may chooſe for their recreation, ſuch as hunting, courſing, horſe-racing, &c. provided a fair lady's attachment to ſuch ſports, or the dreſs which faſhion may have appointed for taking them in, don't give her ſuch a looſeneſs in her ſpeech or geſture, as to make her ſo far forget her being a female, as either to do or ſay any thing inconſiſtent with that delicacy that ought to regulate the actions of every woman of ſenſe, a maniſh female being, of all monſtrous characters, the moſt diſagreeable.

accuſa-

accuſation for venal offences is made an article of faith,) can be to them; beſides, it is taking an unbecoming liberty with the women different from what we ought, or even do take, on any other occaſion, and which I believe few of them really approve, though they know not how to prevent it; nay, the men themſelves tacitly acknowledge the abſurdity, moſt having complaiſance enough, if in company with women, to retire at ſome diſtance, as not preſuming to commit an act of indecency in the preſence of thoſe they are ſuppoſed to have under their particular protection, however uncivil they may be to others at the ſame time. In taverns likewiſe, or other public houſes, where it is not unuſual to ſee a conveniency ſtand in one corner of the room, a woman's preſence puts any wellbred man in pain till the naſty vehicle is removed; tho' the ſame wellbred perſon ſhall ſo readily forget all his good manners, as to make no ſcruple of going into the open ſtreet to do that publickly, and almoſt in the face of twenty women below, which would have been eſteemed monſtrous in the preſence of the females of his acquaintance above ſtairs; and yet I ſee no reaſon why every woman, though not of my acquaintance, is not, as a woman, equally intitled to the ſame reſpect; or why a man ſhould preſume, or indeed why he ſhould be permitted, to ſhew leſs civility, with regard to points of public decency, to a woman he is unacquainted with, than to his ſiſter, his couſin, or his next door neighbour, though we may hourly ſee (in this very polite town) that nothing is more common; and though cuſtom may have brought our full grown and experienced ma-

trons to diſregard ſuch behaviour, the ideas of young minds do not always implicitly move agreeable to the directions of their inſtructors; and the *impudent novelty*, as St. Auſtin expreſſes it *, may excite their curioſity and attention, farther than is conſiſtent with that purity of mind, which is decent for every young girl, at leaſt, to pretend to. In ſhort, though the ridiculous habit may be practiſed by the generality of men with very little deſign either to affront, or injure the fair ſex, it is certainly otherwiſe with too many; wretches, who having obſerved to what purpoſe inſtinct has taught their fellow-brutes of the canine tribe to uſe it, and having the ſame appetite to gratify, with as little of the tender paſſion, affront human nature in expreſſing their dog-like inclinations by the ſame action; and therefore, though it ſhall be thought inconvenient to debar the people in general from the uſe of this bad cuſtom, let us at leaſt diſcountenance its being made a cloak to ſuch vicious, ſuch abominable practices; and more eſpecially, when we actually perceive it uſed meerly to cover purpoſes the moſt libidinous and unpardonable, and which cannot but be productive of the worſt conſequences, I mean the practice of a certain ſet of fellows, who take more pleaſure in premeditately debauching the minds of little girls, than perhaps they could be capable of enjoying any other way, though with the moſt beautiful of the ſex: a practice, which

* *De Civit. Dei*, lib. xiv. cap. 17. where ſpeaking of the ſhame our firſt parents conceived on beholding each other naked, ſays, "*Extitit in motu corporis quædam impudens novitas* "*unde eſſet indecens nuditas et fecit attentos rediditque confuſos.*"

though

though it ought to be the care of every man, as well thoſe who are, as thoſe who may be parents, to prevent, is yet ſo ſhockingly notorious, that numbers of theſe wretches may be daily pointed out, who frequent the public walks, fields, and gardens, where children uſually reſort, with no other intent or deſign, than catching ſuch beaſtly opportunities; and though it is terrible to think, that even thoſe of the loweſt claſs of children, who through want or idleneſs, are let looſe about the ſtreets, to ſhift for themſelves; and whoſe parents (if they have any) think it no harm for them to work their way through the world as they have done before them, ſhould, by the allurement of a few halfpence (which theſe gentlemen commonly carry gingling in their coat-pockets for that purpoſe) be inticed to the moſt lewd practices, it is ſtill more terrible, that the daughters of men of probity and fortune ſhould not be exempt from treachery of the ſame nature, if they are ſuffered to be the leaſt in the way of it; nor can I conceive (as things are at preſent) how any parent can anſwer in their own mind for the conſequences that are ſo likely to happen, who permit their children to ramble about without ſome proper perſon to take care of, and protect them, from falling in the way of ſuch treatment; and really people ought to have a more than ordinary good opinion even of their male domeſtics, conſidering to what a height in lewdneſs mankind in general are arrived, before they commit (as is ſo commonly done) ſo great, ſo valuable a charge to them, as the infant innocence of a darling daughter. I ſhould be ſorry to

appear cenſorious, meerly for the ſake of being ſo, but own, I think the cuſtom of breeding up black boys in ſuch familiarity with the children of the family, as is uſually done in England, not to be deemed a matter of ſuch indifference; and yet one would imagine people conſidered them as much diveſted of the advantages or impulſes of nature, as the attendants in a Turkiſh ſeraglio; when in all probability they may be endowed with paſſions, perhaps ſtronger than thoſe of our own complexion, and though brought up in virtuous families, and made Chriſtians, are no more to be thought exempt from vicious inclinations than the reſt of the ſons of Adam; but either through that influence, which all ſervants have over children, or may be from a child's baſhfulneſs in ſpeaking of that, which ſhe might in her own mind apprehend to be wrong, both from the injunction ſhe may be laid under of ſecrecy, and the aſſurance of being whipped in caſe her mamma came to the knowledge of it, or poſſibly through the fear of being branded with the approbious name of a tell-tale, crimes of this nature come not ſo frequent to the knowledge of the world as others more open, though perhaps leſs atrocious, which makes it imagined they ſeldomer happen than they really do.

However, ills which may be prevented, ſurely ought to be ſo, and the great alacrity which gentlemen of fortune have lately ſhewn, by their aſſociation for preſerving of hares, partridges, *&c.* from falling into hands not legally intitled to meddle with them, is an inducement to hope, that as all fellows of this claſs are certainly poachers of a

ſort of game far more valuable, at leaſt an equal ardour may be ſhewn for their protection; and were the practice above hinted at, ſome way or other, once made puniſhable, it is to be hoped there would not need a ſubſcription for giving rewards to induce detection, it being ſo general an injury, that every honeſt man would make it his own caſe: however, I muſt own I ſee but little proſpect of removing this evil, while the pretence of ſo modeſt, ſo reaſonable a call of nature, is permitted to countenance the continuance of it; or, to ſpeak in plainer terms, while piſſing, or, to uſe the modern phraſe, while *lugging out* * in public, is not to be reckoned a nuiſance.

We have another public grievance, which ſeems alſo crept into a cuſtom, I mean that abominable practice of ſinging obſcene ballads publickly in the ſtreets, which, to make the evil ſtill the greater, is commonly performed at night, when people can flock around the bawling fulſomneſs unſeen and unobſerved. This delicate entertainment, to evince the thorough degeneracy of our manners, and to make even bawdy more poignant, is generally exhibited by two of thoſe female vagabonds I have already taken notice of, who for their encouragement never want an audience, amongſt whom are moſt of the children of both ſex's, as far round as their hideous yell can be diſtinguiſhed, who catching firſt the tune (ſo ſtriking to the ſoul is any thing which has but the leaſt tendency to harmo-

* I have been told that the coarſeneſs of this expreſſion may be offenſive, I mean it ſhould be ſo, the better to expreſs and diſcountenance the action itſelf.

ny)

ny) the words in courſe will follow; in the meaning of which they preſently find opportunities of being inſtructed, prompted either by their own curioſity, in converſe with one another, or (as it is common for boys and girls to herd and play together, and no harm thought of) by the behaviour of ſome pretty forward youth, who having acquired his knowledge, by ſome of the many ways by which it is attainable in this good town, may be capable of being very communicative. The exhibiting certain ludicrous pictures at ſhop-windows, though juſtly enough complained of, as they are apt to catch the eye of the young paſſenger more than is neceſſary, cannot, however, do half the miſchief as a ſet or two of theſe profligate ballad-ſingers, ſince they not only literally explain, but help to rivet in the mind, what the imagination alone, and without ſuch aſſiſtance, might not be able ſo ſoon to find out of itſelf; and though the experienced part of mankind may think, that there are certain times and ſeaſons when levities of this kind may be winked at, and that *Ge ho Dobin*, or any other luſcious modern madrigal, may very inoffenſively be imployed to help forward the gaily circling glaſs, there's not a man of theſe, but in his cooler hours would be ſhocked at hearing the like, with all its graces, yelped through the ſtreets by a creature ſcarcely three feet high, and more eſpecially, if in the performer (a circumſtance not unlikely) he ſhould behold a chip of his own block; and yet to attempt a reſtraint in this ſingle evil would, I am perſuaded, be exclaimed againſt (by thoſe who live by exclaiming) as a ſtep tending to

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a violation of one of our choiceſt privileges, and that to infringe the licence given to theſe hawkers of ſcandal, blaſphemy, and obſcenity, in any one ſingle branch of it, would be to ſtrike at the root of our religion and property; but this is not the only particular, in which, by a miſtaken zeal for freedom, we injure our conſtitution, there being many grievances either too far out of the reach of our laws to be redreſſed, or which are thought too inconſiderable to be ſo, and which, becauſe we are a free, that is, a licentious people, we take the liberty to exert, on every occaſion we can, to the prejudice of one another, for no other reaſon, than becauſe we may.

Among many inſtances of it, I ſhall mention only that perhaps trifling, but common nuiſance, of ſcribbling bawdy poetry, and drawing obſcene portraits, on walls, benches, and indeed wherever the place will permit it, though I can ſee no reaſon why a perſon ſhould not be puniſhable for an injury offered in this way againſt the peace of his Majeſty's good ſubjects, as much as for a ſcurrilous libel againſt any particular member of the government, or even the government itſelf; ſince that which tends to the impairing the morals of a people, can never be beneficial to their polity, and ought, at leaſt, in ſuch light to be conſidered as a ſpecies of rebellion againſt the ſtate *. There's ſcarce a ſchoolboy, turned of five years old, but is capable of ſhewing his ingenuity this way, and

* The Romans gave the name of *conſpiracy* againſt the public to the Bacchanalian aſſemblies, in which the morals of women and young people were debauched. *Livy*, lib. xxxix.

before

before he can hold a pen, can handle a piece of chalk, and flouriſh out an impudent monoſyllable or two, tho' incapable of putting any like number of letters together in an intelligible manner: ought it therefore to be thought hard to reſtrain, if poſſible, the overflowings of ſuch ſecond-hand witlings and ſcribblers from eaſing themſelves in this manner, when the injury they are doing to the next generation (excluſive of the ill conſequences to the preſent) is ſo apparently manifeſt, in the adroitneſs of their puny copyiſts.

There are many convenient apartments and places, in and about the precincts of a neighbouring pariſh, where liberties of this nature might be ſuffered with leſs indignation, than where the modeſt eye of a virtuous woman is liable to be offended, or the innocence of young minds excited into guilt by it; but the taſte of the preſent age is, it ſeems, more refined, than to harrow in unprofitable ground, and ſince vitiating an innocent young creature's mind, is eſteemed the next pleaſure to that of debauching her perſon, it is no wonder that places, which ought to be regarded as the moſt ſacred, ſhould not be exempt from profanation of the like nature, and particularly, that the windows of ſome of our politeſt ſeminaries for the tuition of young ladies, and where the daughters of perhaps ſome of the beſt families in England are depoſited, cannot eſcape being ſcrawled over with ſuch like rudiments of inſtruction, under the polite notions of ingenuity and gallantry †. If,

† It is not long ago, that a couple of boarding-ſchool miſſes

If, therefore, the firſt female could not reſiſt againſt the ſubtlety of only one devil, how is it poſſible her heedleſs poſterity (equally as uncultivated) ſhould be capable of doing it, who have ſuch numbers to encounter, who vary as different ſhapes, and couch in as artful diſguiſes, as did the firſt betrayer; while the ſame fatal cataſtrophy, that happened in Eden ſo many thouſand years ago, is daily acted throughout the habitable world, with this difference only, that ſatan, from his increaſe of labour, now makes uſe of journeymen, who by cuſtom and practice are as expert at the fraud as himſelf; for I have charity enough for the ſex to think, that, in the original ſtate of nature, woman was at leaſt as free from imperfection as the man, and that as ſhe might have continued ſo, had the devil been out of the queſtion, ſo might the whole race of them, even now, be much better than they are, would his emiſſaries but let them be quiet *; but inſtead of this, we ſeem,

miſſes borrowed, from a certain bookſeller, that moſt ingenious performance, called *Memoirs of a Lady of Pleaſure*, which the governeſs having diſcovered, returned to the owner with a proper meſſage: notwithſtanding which he had the good nature to oblige the young ladies with it a ſecond time, which the old gentlewoman again diſcovering, thought it prudent not to return it, ſo that the modeſt man was obliged to bring his action for the recovery of the book. I ſhould be glad to know what could be the firſt incitement to this ſurpriſing curioſity in theſe young ladies; nature may be very powerful, it is true, but ſhe is rarely ſo extreamly rampant, unleſs excited by practices ſomething like thoſe which have been hinted at above.

* Permit me to obſerve here, that the opinions of ſome of

ſeem, by ſtratagem and practice, to be endeavouring to pervert thoſe benefits and happineſſes we naturally might enjoy, from the temperature of our climate, by introducing the inflaming vices of thoſe countries into it, where the people may be allowed to plead a phyſical excuſe for being wanton †.

I ſhall not preſume to dictate a remedy for ſuch evils, the calamities which theſe, and many more of the ſame nature, bring upon the nation, as they are too numerous to be recounted, ſo are they too weighty to be removed at once, or even attempted, but by a ſupream authority; for unleſs the reform was general, little good could be expected from only ſome few families beginning it in themſelves, people not chooſing to be thought particular even in virtue, it being likewiſe not in-

of the ancient fathers of the church ſeem to concur with me, in reſpect to ſome particulars which I have advanced before, *viz.* our being ſo public in our exhibitions on certain occaſions; they, I ſay, ſeem not very well agreed about who, or what this devil might be, and though we are told it was a ſerpent, yet have broached ſtrange conjectures about him, and tell us, that though the woman might be tempted, yet that it was a ſomething in the man (call it what you pleaſe) that was the motive of ſuch temptation, by which original ſin came into the world.

† In a collection of voyages for eſtabliſhment of an Eaſt-India company, vol. ii. p. 2. it is ſaid, That at Patan the wanton deſires of the women are ſo outrageous, that the men are obliged to make uſe of certain apparel to ſhelter them from their deſigns, Any one who walks through ſome of our principal ſtreets, after the cloſe of the evening, may be convinced how nearly ſome of our females are arrived at Patanic manners.

 conſiſtent

conſiſtent with reaſon to breed up our children, agreeable to the cuſtoms of the country in which they are to live and get their bread, and not in ſuch a way, as might turn them into ridicule; and as it would be proper, ſuppoſing us born among ſavages, to be ſhewn and inſtructed in their haunts, leſt they catch us at unawares, or by ſurprize, ſo, in order to avoid what miſchiefs we have among ourſelves, it may be as neceſſary to be apprized of them: and in this light we may account for the good intention of many of thoſe celebrated performances in modern literature, that have made their appearance in the gay world; and this certainly was the prudent gentleman's notion, who himſelf carried his ſon to a bawdy-houſe, and may (for ought I know) be the motive that ſo conſtantly conveens ſuch numbers of our innocent females in our courts of juſtice, whenever there are indictments for rapes, adulteries, *&c.* at which times (as matters of fact muſt neceſſarily be explained) theſe young *noviciates*, we may ſuppoſe, qualify themſelves to act on ſuch emergencies according to law; however, I am ready to think that nothing will more conduce to the forwarding a general change in our manners, than the happy ſituation which that noble charity, the Foundling Houſe, ſeems at length arrived at, could it be aſſiſted by a yet further inſtitution, adapted only for the care of vagabond girls, whoſe parents (if they had ſuch) ſhould be judged not able, or not willing to bring them up to, or inſtruct them in any method of getting a living, but ſuch as muſt evidently tend to their own deſtruction,

tion, and the miſery of the public; for though the Foundling-Houſe may, it is to be hoped, in a courſe of years, help to prevent much of thoſe miſchiefs that muſt be expected from the future exiſtence of thoſe ſuffering infants, who are taught deceit from their very births, and by practice are compelled to moan and cry, the readier to win compaſſion for the ſuppoſed parent, or perhaps (as it ought to do) leſſen the number of infant ballad-ſingers, and half-naked ſellers of matches, as well as the ſwarm of little idle lie-about baggages, that are to be ſeen in almoſt every ſtreet in town; I ſay it might do this, but it is greatly to be apprehended that many of theſe evils will ſtill remain, from the wilful neglect of people, whoſe miſtaken fondneſs, or rather pride, (the conſtant attendant on poverty,) may prevent their children accepting the benefit of this charity *in time*, and though in a ſtate little above ſtarving, will, according to the old cant term, rather chooſe *to beg their bread with them* (begging indeed being no very indifferent occupation now-a-days) than part with them IN THAT MANNER; by which the unhappy ſufferers muſt in conſequence become vagabonds, or, what I cannot but eſteem next to it, under the guardianſhip of the pariſh. Theſe are incidents that muſt happen (taking it in the beſt light we can); and as there will be great numbers of young women, by the means of this charity, properly qualified for all ſervices, thoſe who are not ſo, will then be leſs capable of getting an honeſt livelihood, than at preſent; ſo that there will ſtill be wretches abundantly ſufficient to ſupply the calls of viciouſneſs;

and

and proves the neceſſity of a further care; for I can never entertain ſo high an idea of innate virtue (conſidering the alloy it meets with in our compoſition) as to think it poſſible for a woman to remain ſteady, when expoſed to want and temptation; nay, had even Pamela herſelf, that remarkable pattern of chaſtity, been born and bred in the precincts of St. Giles's, and had had the accumulated miſeries of cold and hunger to combat againſt, as well as the importunities of a pretty fellow, who would generouſly have relieved her from them, our wonder, as well as her merit, would be proportionably greater, than when we conſider her in circumſtances ſo very different *, excluſive of that armour of the mind, by which, we are told, her natural modeſty had been early ſtrengthened in the principles of religion and virtue; nor, in fact, are the generality of Harlots, from their firſt entrance into their abandon vocation, brought to it ſo much through choice or inclination, as by idleneſs, and its conſequence, neceſſity; ſince the old taunting phraſe, of being "BETTER FED THAN TAUGHT," whatever we may think of it, has, I believe, kept more women from falling into that way of life, than where we have met with the expreſſion reverſed; but this is only meant in regard to common proſtitutes, or ſtreetwalkers, amongſt whom may alſo be comprehended thoſe of a higher claſs, called *ladies of pleaſure*; for as to Women of faſhion or quality, who may be pleaſed to give a

* I wiſh there may not have been many a pretty damſel, whoſe ſentiments have bordered more upon envy than pity at her diſtreſſed character.

looſe or freedom to their behaviour, they coming under the title of *demi-reps*, are ſuch out of pure inclination, from ſome of the cauſes before mentioned (*viz.*) a too early curioſity leading them to comprehend the truth of natural cauſes, prompted to it by the many matters of ſpeculation daily offering, by a warmth in their conſtitution, ſet aglow either by reading modern literature, adapted for that purpoſe, the ſly inſinuations of a ſlut of a chamber-maid, or the too great confidence of her Mamma in the innocence of a favourite Footman, Friend, or Relation.

Though every Effect, which is not immediate or contiguous to its Cauſe, may be miſtaken, or attributed to a wrong foundation, yet when we conſider (from what has been hinted at before) how much the irregular paſſions of the Men may, though remotely, ſtill be deemed the cauſe of moſt of thoſe unhappy indiſcretions, to which the female world are liable, from whom their ill effects recoil again with added force to others, 'tis to thoſe paſſions, chiefly, the remedy ſhould be applied; but ſince to ſooth, to curb, divert, or govern theſe inordinate affections in us, have, by our greateſt writers, often been ESSAYED in vain, while every treatiſe on them only proves, how difficult it is for human nature to act againſt itſelf; and ſince of all our various paſſions, that diſtinguiſhed by the name of LOVE, ſeems hardeſt to ſubdue, a paſſion, which, in ſpight of reaſon, all mankind are, by the common force of nature prone to gratify, 'twere prudent to remit a few of thoſe auſterities, that would diveſt the human mind of every

thing but intellect, and not by penning up a conſtitutional infirmity, force it to prey upon the nobler parts, rather than permit a phyſical diſcharge of the diſeaſe.

That Brothels are already but too public, may ſeem, and even has been cenſured as, a grievance of no trivial conſequence, and yet we ſee them ſo far tolerated, as to be (if you'l admit the expreſſion) publickly connived at, not in an obſcure receſs, or private place, but in the midſt, the heart of our Metropolis; and though nothing would diſcountenance their preſent ill effects ſo much, as being brought under ſome proper regulations, with what contempt, nay with what fury, would any ſerious propoſition be received, to eſtabliſh them by law; the odious appellation of A PUBLIC STEW carries ſo harſh an inuendo with it, that people would be perſuaded to believe, an inſtitution of ſuch a nature little better than an open violation of all laws, both human and divine; witneſs the wrong conſtructions and unmeaning ſarcaſms that are ſtill daily vented againſt that glorious one, the Foundling-Houſe, and we ſhould therefore have books and ballads, prints and news papers, exhibited againſt ſuch a deſign, with as much virulency and indignation, as were lately againſt the memorable *Jew bill*, when, at the ſame time, the cauſe of Virtue might be as much out of the queſtion in the clamour againſt the one, as was, perhaps, that of Chriſtianity, amongſt moſt of the opponents to the other.

Give me leave, however, to carry the reflection a little further.

I ſhall paſs over the many particular advantages reſulting from ſuch an inſtitution, they having been ſo fully treated of, in a certain Pamphlet publiſhed ſome years ago, as to make any thing I could ſay on that head impertinent *; but as a very principal benefit might accrue from ſuch an eſtabliſhment, which was either looked over by that judicious author, or purpoſely omitted, who (though I acknowledge myſelf unequal in ſchemes of this nature to ſuch an adept) ſeems to have formed his plan as much with a view to private pleaſure, as for the promoting a public benefit; and ſince the ſtill permitting ladies of the town (the ſofteſt appellation I can give them) openly to haunt our chief aſſemblies, and brazen in the very face of quality, ſeems a nuiſance which even that piece, elaborate as it is, has not conſidered as an evil, I ſhall confine my ſentiments on ſuch a ſcheme only to that particular.

The prevailing taſte in the article of dreſs is raiſed ſo high, that any thing in the Attire, which may viſibly denote a modeſt woman, is reckoned ungenteel, becauſe it is commonly out of faſhion, few of our new-invented modes being perfectly conformable to the rules of decency, it being a fundamental laid down by moſt of our modern belles, *to look as engaging as they can* †; but though cuſtom and faſhion goes a great way in ſanctifying every thing, the obſervation of a certain modern

* A treatiſe to prove the reaſonableneſs and benefit of public whoring, by a toleration of public ſtews, by Col. H. Mordaunt, in 1743.

† Vide *Guardian*, N° 10.

Author

Author ſeems juſt, when he tells us, that any thing in the attire, which has an effect too alluring, cannot be ſaid to be ſtrictly decent; and if we conſider the ſource from whence moſt of our modern whims are taken (I mean thoſe inviting allurements, the ſhort pettycoats, the triſted hat, the dangling ribbands, with a long *&c.* we ſhall find it would be palpably inconſiſtent with the deſign of their firſt inſtitution, to expect they ſhould be ſo; and if thoſe, whom we cannot but acknowledge to be really modeſt women, will not forbear catching theſe inticing airs from wretches, who for their daily bread are compelled to hang out ſuch *Signs*, and ſtretch every action to the outſide of modeſty, what wonder that the whole promiſcuous throng of females in general, paſs under the common cenſure of light, wanton, and fantaſtic? or, how can women of virtue expect to have that difference paid them they deſerve, when they cannot by any means be diſtinguiſhed from Hirelings and Proſtitutes? but there's a kind of epidemic madneſs in the ſex, that has always hurried them into indiſcretions and follies, often, without any other motive, than meerly the pleaſure (to uſe the faſhionable phraſe) of *looking*, as well as doing, *like other people* *. It

* Thus when the Romans (after many regulations with reſpect to lewd women) enacted, that every one who ſet up for the public reception of company, ſhould enter her name in the Ædiles books, the women of rank and condition, not chooſing to be excluded from any thing they thought looked like a privilege, many illuſtrious names appeared upon the roll; the ſenate therefore found it neceſſary to put ſome reſtraint upon the faſhionable whim, by not allowing any

It was certainly a wiſe method among the Lacedæmonians, that their common women were obliged to tie their hair † in ſome particular manner (plaiting it perhaps) whenever they appeared in public; and we are told, that the common women in England were formerly compelled to wear a ſort of ſtriped hood, in order to diſtinguiſh them from women of virtue; but was it poſſible for ſuch a method to be attempted now for the like purpoſe, ſo wretchedly perverſe are the generality of our very fine ladies (with whom an affected heedleſsneſs in all they ſay and do, and the committing abſurdities without bluſhing, are ſubſtituted for the real indications of innocency) that for the joy of being celebrated for a girl of fire, and by that means of attracting the regard of that ſpecies of our men, diſtinguiſhed in the aſſumed title of *youths of ſpirit*, ſome pretty piece of inconſiſtency would ſo triumph in the bravery of her own ſelf-ſufficiency, as to break through the good deſign of ſuch reſtriction, as ſupercilious, impertinent, and an infringement on the liberty of people of taſte and genius; the conſequence of which muſt be, that in leſs than a month the diſtinction would vaniſh, and whores and modeſt women indiſtinguiſhably herd together, juſt as they do at preſent: not that the women of the town would themſelves, perhaps, be much averſe to ſome diſtinction of this nature, provided it could be cal-

woman to have the privilege of being a whore, whoſe grandfather, father, or huſband, was not below the degree of a Roman knight.

† Vide note in *Francis's Horace*, Ode xi. lib. 2.

culated

culated ſo, as not to be detrimental to their calling, it being a general complaint among them, that the modeſt women fall into their manners, and ape them ſo in every thing, that even a true ſportſman is liable to be lead upon a wrong ſcent, by which the proper quarry miſs their opportunity, to the detriment of the trade: that they have done all on their parts to keep their own killing methods to themſelves, may be inſtanced in the different figures and diſtortions they have made that little whimſical affair, the *hat*, undergo, both by trimming and cocking it, through every change of which the whole town have been complaiſant enough to follow; and when a celebrated lady of this order, to elude the impertinence of being mimicked, twiſted hers on one ſide, it was enough for F—— M—— to appear ſo, to make it approved of, and thought becoming.

Is it not, therefore, ſeriouſly to be wiſhed, that ſome method ſhould be attempted, which might prevent theſe people from aſſociating with, and by their vitiating examples, tainting the brighteſt and moſt becoming ornament of our chaſter virgins, a decency of manners?

How, therefore, this can be effectually done, is next to be conſidered.

Although the ancients may have ſet us many wiſe examples, in their general treatment of, and the reſtraints and ordinances they were continually impoſing, on people of this profeſſion; yet, as the cuſtoms and conſtitutions of their ſeveral governments were different, in many circumſtances, from that we live under, we muſt not hope to remove

ſuch grievances, by a ſtrict conformity to their methods; for what would it avail, to formally prohibit our ladies of this ſtamp the uſe of ornamental finery, as Rings, Lace, Pendants, or any other innocent embelliſhment they now may wear in common with their ſex *, or even to abridge them of the Cardinal, the Negligée, the Peton l'ier, or any other new-invented veſtment of French, or other foreign inſtitution †, when not a moiety of them, from inability in point of circumſtances, would be capable of infringing ſuch a law? or grant it otherwiſe, where ſhould we find a ſingle ſhe, of all the herd, would ſo far own the approbrious appellation, as voluntarily to comply with the degrading mandate? and though they might be known notoriouſly enough, as nothing but *ſolemn proof* could fix the indeliable ſtain, and brand them with the penalty, he who ſhould preſume, without it, but to tax the vileſt with the Title (though known to be her calling) would by the juſt deciſion of the law, and the wiſe approbation of *twelve good men and true*, be ceſſed with damages and coſts for his impertinence. If then our laws require ſuch formal methods with thoſe, whoſe every look and word, as well as general way of living, might, one ſhould think, carry conviction with it, how ſhould the ills be reached, when the baſe TRADE is ſcreened behind the name of ſome protecting Patron ‡, or placed

* A law in Athens.

† Common women at Rome were forbid to wear the *ſtola*, or matron's gown.

‡ The permitting a favourite woman (though an inmate in the moſt lewd repoſitory of wickedneſs) to uſurp the name

placed within the merit of parochial privileges; where, for the ſake of adding a trifle to the Revenue, the Harlot has a Licence (under pretence of ſelling punch) for telling you her Brothel is her Caſtle by the laws of England, that herſelf and Inmates, are people of credit and reputation, nay, and will trounce any one who ſhall preſume but to whiſper the contrary.

Let us, however, admit that ſome Order for diſtinguiſhing theſe people, could be juſtly executed; and that a method could alſo be contrived, to prevent the inconveniencies attending the frequent, and repeated proſecutions, informations, *&c.* as muſt eternally enſue, and that this diſtinction ſhould be *a ſomething* in the garb, directed ſo particular, as to include the whole of them; yet, while a pretty woman has that certain, that irreſiſtable power, of turning every thing to her own advantage (and that the town's not deſtitute of beauty, muſt be owned, though 'tis ſo wretchedly degraded,) our virtuous ladies might eſteem themſelves no gainers in being excluded from *that ſomething* (be it what it would) which might, from the advantages given to it by the lovely wearer, be fancied more becoming than thoſe ſtiff formalities, that ſhould be the approved characteriſtics of modeſty and virtue; for, how ready our condeſcending virgins are, even now, of rejecting ſuch, and of reducing themſelves to a

name of her devotee, though a man of quality, is deemed a peculiar mark of the young ladies favour, who condeſcends to make uſe of it; and the Hero, from that inſtant, by being eſteemed her *particular*, is conſequently her *Patron*; in low life, her *Bully*.

kind

kind of level with their antagoniſts, may be remarked in the particularly ſtriking airs they have borrowed from them, in ſetting off the Hat, the Cap, the Handkerchief, from the manner of pinning the latter, 'tis plain, how much that old faſhioned piece, called the modeſty bit, is out of vogue among them; theſe, I ſay, together with the notable ſmartneſs in the tie of a round about apron, and the trite milk-maid air of a ſhort ſkirted petticoat, deſigned purpoſely to ſhew juſt enough beneath it, as to ſet imagination on the glow, makes it ſo difficult to diſtinguiſh between Chambermaids and their Miſtreſſes, or W—rs and Women of faſhion.

The only mark that might not be followed by their Imitators, and from which we might expect ſome good, as it would not, perhaps, be very beneficial to their trade, nor what they could ſo eaſily lay aſide as any other, muſt be a perſonal one; when I ſay a mark, I mean a real Scar, which ſhould appear naked; for a broad patch, though in the middle of the forehead, might, for ought I know, be found as becoming as that worn at preſent on the temples; and how little diſtinguiſhing that is, is evident enough; but as burning or branding felons in the face was laid aſide, as being a means of hardening them in wickedneſs, by excluding them, eternally, from all honeſt ſociety, our eccleſiaſtical Rulers would not, ſo readily, come into this remedy, for the like religious reaſon.

To conſider, therefore, our firſt ſcheme a little further; were it, I ſay, poſſible, by any means, whatever, to oblige theſe ſort of people never to appear

appear in public, but in a garb as unbecoming as a pariſh gown, to which the ignominy of a badge might be added, declaring their place of reſidence and price, ſome of our preſent complaints would be removed; as they might then be known, and legally excluded from all our public Recreations, nor ſuffered to hold their nightly carnavals, as now they do, in every ſtreet in town. But when we come to reflect, even this method, as it muſt bring a certain, and conſiderable charge upon the public (one half of whom do not eſteem theſe people as any nuiſances at all) for providing a ſufficient number of Informers, properly ſtationed, in every quarter of this good town, to keep up this œconomy among them, without the means of raiſing a ſingle ſhilling to ſupport it, would be rejected; the knowing part of mankind thinking our taxes and aſſeſſment high enough already, without accumilating others for leſs neceſſary purpoſes, than thoſe they are obliged to pay at preſent; excluſive of the miſchiefs that might enſue, under the ſanction of ſuch licenſed habits *. And as to diſpoſing of them to our plantations, though it would, in all probability, anſwer moſt of thoſe ſalutary ends we ſeek, without incurring the objection of expence, as the money raiſed by ſale of them, would, in ſome reſpect, anſwer the charge of getting rid of them; yet, as we ſeem too humane and compaſſionate, even to put thoſe laws in force againſt

* What a conveniency would this be to all admirers of the liberties of a carnaval? in ſhort, what a door would it open to cuckoldom and fornication?

them

them, which we may, we ſhall never be ſo hard hearted as to think of making others, for ſending them out of the kingdom like ſlaves, vagabonds, and felons, unleſs ſomething more heinous than ſimple whoredom can be laid to their charge, to bring them within the penalties of tranſportation: nor are ſuch ſeverities adviſable, if we conſider the ill conſequences that ſuch a gap of neceſſary evils (as in one ſenſe they may be allowed to be) might produce at home; for though it was thought proper to cover that noiſome ſink of the city, called Fleet-ditch, it was abſolutely contradictory to common ſenſe, to think of filling it up, intirely, as a *Vent* any where elſe, for the ſame purpoſe, would, certainly, not have been ſo proper or convenient.

With ſubmiſſion, then, to deeper politicians, as theſe people, though nuiſances, ought no more to be extirpated, than permitted to go on as they do, I ſhall only differ from the general plan of the before mentioned Treatiſe, by recommending the place of their deſtination to be a place of actual confinement, or rather, like the priſoners in the rules of the Fleet and King's-bench, under exemplary penalties for elopements, where each being regiſtered, and appraiſed according to her particular merit, men of all conditions, whoſe inclinations or conſtitution ſhould be too powerful for their reaſon, might, with leſs injury than at preſent, to themſelves or fortunes, gratify their taſtes according to their different prices; a ſettled ſtipend of which, inſtead of going, as it did formerly, to

increaſe

increaſe the revenue of a certain Prelate, ſhould be allotted to defray the expence of keeping them there*. But as this method of treating them, would cut out a large branch of buſineſs from ſome of our acting Magiſtrates; to make them ſome amends, a certain number might be appointed, whoſe particular duty, ſhould be to inſpect the conduct of thoſe females, who pretend to be ſo houſewifely of their reputations, as to part with them only with greater œconomy than the more public ſpirited may do; for unleſs we can intirely reduce our private brothels, or force them to take ſanctuary in the public one, 'tis not barely ſcouring the ſtreets of Harlots, that can be ſufficient to remove the evil †.

Some reſtrictions like theſe might, indeed, reduce the ſtream of lewdneſs into its proper channel; and while our children's minds, by timely caution, ſhould be ſhielded from thoſe corruptions which

* Cupers-gardens, and the diſtricts thereabouts, might not be an improper ſituation: indeed, I can't ſay, whether the leſſening the value of eſtates, in the quarter where they are at preſent, might not be judged a ſufficient motive to oppoſe their transfretation.

† To engage theſe magiſtrates the ſtricter to their duty, as cenſors, they ſhould not be permitted to act as trading juſtices, but their poſts be made properly lucrative without it.—A magiſtrate, of this kind, was appointed at Athens; but the inſtitution of Domeſtic Tribunals, ſupplied the place of ſuch among the Romans.—The proctors at the univerſities are ſomething like them in this particular, that they ought not to ſuffer a proſtitute within the precincts of their juriſdictions.

help

help in time to feed the miſchiefs we complain of, the ſpring of virtue may refine itſelf; and we might, with better reaſon, hope to have thoſe heavy calumnies and reflections, which are now caſt on our women in general, abate of much of their rancour, for want of ſo good a foundation; ſuch invectives proceeding chiefly from thoſe, who, becauſe they judge of the whole by the worſt of patterns, are ſo far from being capable of conceiving a true idea of the beauties of a woman really virtuous, as even to deny the Exiſtence of ſuch a Being in nature †. But if the injunctions of our religion are ſo ſtrict as (rather than tolerate a neceſſary evil in a few for a benefit to the remainder) to ſuffer the whole to grovel on from bad to worſe, by countenancing our laws, to wink at impieties they are not permitted to redreſs; let us, at leaſt, acknowledge the ſuperior wiſdom of thoſe people, whoſe maxims and inſtitutions, though we may have virtue enough to admire, we want the reſolution to put in practice; and when we behold theſe provokers to debauchery, in all their trim of harlottry, wantoning, unabaſhed in the moſt conſpicuous places of our public Theatres, confeſs the Roman virtue greater (though unenlightened by Chriſtianity) that found out methods to exclude them theirs *; and when we ſee them trifling with our laws, by evading, or buying

† King Charles the ſecond thought there was no ſuch thing in the world as chaſtity out of principle. *Burnet's Hiſt.* p. 94.

* 'Tis the ſhameleſs behaviour of theſe people at the playhouſes, that ſo far perverts the moral purpoſe of that ſenſible, elegant and improving diverſion, as often to bring it into diſrepute.

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off their force, extol the wiſdom as well as juſtice of that Emperor (though a heathen) who, to rid his citizens from the conſequences of ſuch licentiouſneſs, diſpoſed of them for ſlaves †.

As it is not, however, from the frailty of human nature, to be expected that this country ſhould, any more than any other, be exempt from nuiſances of this kind, yet has it ever been the care of the wiſeſt legiſlators to permit evils, though incurable, to be as little epidemical as poſſible; and when we conſider how much the principles, imbibed in youth, are apt to prepare the mind for the reception of vice or virtue, there will need but little argument to convince the unprejudiced, how apparently a wrong method, or rather a neglect in the education of our females, in general, tends to the injury of the whole community, and, conſequently, what care ought to be employed, not only to inſtruct them in thoſe particular accompliſhments of houſewifery, that all women ought to know who are bred at every common boarding ſchool, but that ſuch a knowledge of THEMSELVES, might be early taught the whole of them, as to make them ſenſible, how much more their Maker deſigned them to eſteem themſelves the Companions, than the Playthings of their huſbands; and that the affection which may be, and is ſo frequently preſerved between married people, is not, as Mr. Bayle obſerves, grounded on the beauty, but the qualities of the wife; experience ſhewing, that the huſbands, whoſe love are the moſt laſting, are not,

† Severus.

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for the generality, thoſe who have the handſomeſt wives; look elſewhere than in beauty, ſays the ſame Author, for that charm which unites the heart, and keeps it afterwards united. Nor can it ever be ſo certainly attained as by preſerving, what I muſt call their *natural modeſty*, unprejudiced by wrong examples, by cultivating their ideas, ſo as to make them diſtinguiſh Merit from Foppery, and by early inſtilling into them a becoming diffidence of their own perfections; and after ſuch foundations, the higheſt accompliſhments that could be given them, would be ſo far from arming an enemy againſt ourſelves, that it would be a means of cementing the band of amity between the ſexes ſtill ſtronger; for, though a woman's power, now ſo juſtly dreaded, might, in ſome reſpects, be greater; her inclinations, from an improvement in her morals, would be leſs inclined to miſapply it; and her being made more capable of diſtinguiſhing the true value, either of her own, or huſband's merit, would neither leſſen that protecting fondneſs, that is one of the principal duties of every huſband, nor take from her the opportunities of acquiring, what we are told are now the only Arts and Sciences of a female life, namely, to be well dreſt, in good humour, and chearful in the command of her family; for had the wife of Gracchus * been endowed with nothing more, her ſons had never attained that elegance in ſpeaking, and purity of language, for which they were ſo famous; and of ſo great importance was it in the eye of Solomon, for a woman to be capable of giving proper

* Cornelia. See her character in *Middleton's Life of Cicero*.

inſtruction to her children, and fixing them in the paths of virtue and underſtanding, that he even declares, the ignorance or folly of a child, to be the ſhame, the diſgrace, and heavineſs of its mother; while the aſſurance, which the ſame great writer gives us, when he tells us that a wiſe ſon maketh a glad father, would be excitement, ſufficient, in a country ſuch as ours, where women are renowned for conjugal affection, for every female to attempt acquiring (were they but permitted to do ſo) the higheſt of thoſe female virtues, which have been thought to add even luſtre to the Roman name; while the hope of being capable to pleaſe, and to deſerve ſuch a woman, (in whoſe eye true merit could be only beautiful,) muſt create ſo glorious an emulation in our youth, in general, as to have that ſaid of the whole nation, which has yet been publickly recorded but of one family of it, "THAT ALL HER SONS ARE BRAVE, AND ALL HER DAUGHTERS VIRTUOUS *."

But as I have not the vanity to ſuppoſe, that any thing I can ſay, will have weight enough to bring about ſo wiſhed a reformation, my purpoſe will be anſwered, ſhould any thing, here treated of, be a means of engaging ſome other in the cauſe, whoſe abilities may be equal to the undertaking, firmly believing, that were the mutual grievances of both ſexes, with their efficient cauſes fairly ſtated, the Men themſelves, however the bent of natural partiality might, for a moment,

* Vide the epitaph of the Dutcheſs of Newcaſtle, the ſiſter of Lord Lucas, in Weſtminſter-abbey.

bias them, would turn their preſent cenſures of the fair to ſentiments of pity, and, ſince a levity in female conduct opens a door to almoſt every immorality, confeſs, the readieſt means to ſtop the ſtill increaſe, will be to check the cauſe of it, in THEMSELVES.

FINIS.